

**LINCOLN/LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING STAFF REPORT**  

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**for October 27, 2004 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**P.A.S.:** Change of Zone #04069 - Off Premises Signs

**PROPOSAL:** Text amendments to :

*Zoning, Title 27 LMC;*

The addition of: **27.69.035, b, (8): No off-premises signs shall be located within 660 feet of Interstate 80 and 180.**

**CONCLUSION:** This proposed amendment provides for regulation of off-premises signs along Interstates 80 and 180. The proposed areas have been regulated by the Nebraska Department of Roads in the past. However, after recent circumstances in other jurisdictions, the state's policy to regulate off-premises signs is in question. This proposal provides for local control of off premises signs involving interstates within the City of Lincoln's jurisdiction.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>
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Approval of the attached text
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**HISTORY:** Local zoning regulations for the city of Lincoln have been in place since 1979 with minor changes. In addition the State of Nebraska, since 1959, has been regulating off-premises signs along the interstate with various permitting controls as well as advertising control easements.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SPECIFICATIONS:**

Preserve and enhance entryway corridors into Lincoln and Capitol View Corridors. (F19)

Most cities, including Lincoln, protect their cultural/architectural heritage through formal historic preservation efforts. Lincoln has taken further steps to protect and promote a positive physical character through special design requirements that protect the environs and views of the State Capitol Building -- our community's signature urban design asset -- and that encourage compatible infill in its older neighborhoods. The Capitol Environs Commission is unique in that its membership includes city and state appointees, and its authority extends to all public and private projects within its district, including State projects. Its authority to identify and project important public vistas to the Capitol should be strengthened. (F19)

**ANALYSIS:**

1. Currently the City of Lincoln regulates off-premises signs by: minimum distances between signs, entryways to the city at the corporate limits, and in sensitivity zones including historic districts, landmark districts, and the capitol environs.
2. Off-premises signs are allowed in B-1, B-3, B-4, H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4, and I-1 zoning districts. There are several of these districts abutting Interstates 80 and 180 (see attached map).
3. Since the 1950's the Nebraska Department of Roads regulated off-premises signs along the interstate system in and surrounding communities. These areas were determined by each community's corporate limits in 1959 outward along the interstate system. Since these regulations were in place at the state level, most communities, including the City of Lincoln, left the control of off-premises signs in certain areas up to the state. These regulations, due to recent events in the Omaha metro area, are no longer enforced statewide. As a result of this change of enforcement, the Omaha area saw an increase of 18 new billboards along its' interstate system.
4. The state's decision to not enforce the billboard regulations left openings in which billboards (off premises signs) could be installed.
5. The city should not rely on the state to control signs along the interstate.
6. Investigation of the recent events in Omaha are ongoing to fully understand how they pertain to the City of Lincoln and its jurisdiction.

Prepared by:

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